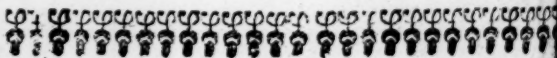




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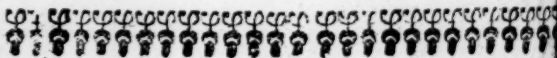
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An EPISTLE of Peace and Good-will unto all the Children of the Lord, against this Suffering Time. 22

Dear Lambs of the living God, for I know you are so, because the Wolves are so greedy to destroy you, I have a Message from the great Bishop and Shepherd of your Souls, unto you all, and in his Fear and Name I am faithfully to deliver it.

Thus saith the Lord, the mighty God and great Shepherd of the flocks

ye not dismayed with any amazement, neither be ye afraid of the multitude of Wolves, and wild Beasts of prey, that feed upon you; for thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, saying, Like the Lion, or young Lion, roareth upon the prey that he hath gotten, and abased for all the heap of them; So shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight for Mount Sion, and defend his Hills: Like as the fowls flutter about their Nests; so shall the Lord of Hosts keep, deliver, and deliver Jerusalem: and what-ever may come to pass, it shall only try you, but not destroy you; for, I will not, not, not leave you, I will save you, saith the Lord, but you shall be mine, and I will save you, whose trust is in me the living God, as a man saveth his only child that serveth him. But, as I have already in measure shewed you, man is in his best estate, and the son of man with all his endowments of Wit, Parts, Learning and Understanding, Strength and Power, together with all his Experiences and Observations (which is our fear and counsel) so I will yet manifest unto you further, the weakness and helplessness of man, and the son of man, how that he is not to be trusted of; and all, for this end, that you may cease from him, and lean upon his arm, neither within nor without, nor go down to Egypt for help; for it shall be known, that the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. O my People, saith the Lord, remember now what Balak King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Peor answered him from Shittim even to Gilgal, that ye may know the Righteousness of the Lord, and how I have appeared for you from time to time, and followed you from Prison to Prison, saith the Lord, with my Life and Presence, and from East to West I have been with you, as I have called you and sent you forth; and by Land ye have seen my Wonders, according as my Providence hath ordered any of you; and in Sickness and Health I have been with you, that many of you can say and bear witness for me, that I have made your weak, infirm and tender bodies, to be strong, and to overcome more hardship and sufferings, than ever you could have believed I had been able to have gone through: and also I have made you forsake your dearest Relations, and to chuse rather to be in Prison with Me, than to dwell in your ceiled houses without my Peace in your hearts, and this you know right well.

O my People, saith the Lord, remember these things, that ye may know me more and more, for I change not: but as I have been with you in all estates and conditions, so I will be with you unto the end: and will bring you and misery upon all your Enemies, that decree against you, they shall not be able to bring to pass their purpose, saith the Lord, for I will beset them, and then make their own folly to correct them; and they shall see it, and be ashamed, but shall not be able to help themselves, nor deliver their own souls. But I will save you my People, saith the Lord, that dwell in my Fear, and give up all unto me, (keeping nothing back in hypocrisy) I will be with you, and in you, and your Enemies shall see you ascend in power and great glory, as gaze upon you, but not being able to hinder you. While I am speaking of it, my heart melts within me, and the Joy of my God overcomes me, only I must not forbear to write these things unto you, because required thereunto by the Lord. Be ye still, and ye shall all know him from the least to the greatest, and he will not forget any one of you, beest thou never so little, poor, and weak in thine own eyes: but the Hypocrites shall be bound hand and foot, so that all their nests and holes shall not hide them, and shall be cast into thick darkness; that as they shall not be able to find their hands to help themselves, so shall they not have an eye to see, any way to escape the just hand and judgment of the Lord: but the upright in heart shall now be known in this day of tryal, who have none but the Lord alone to trust unto, and lean upon; these shall see the Salvation of God, and praise his holy Name, for this pure separating day of his Love unto them, but of Judgment unto all the Hypocrites in Sion; my Exhortation from the Lord unto you All is, To keep low in your hearts and mind, close unto his Light, that

it unto the Seed of Life ye may be led in it to have your dwelling day and night, where no evil tidings come, (as you know right well) and in this sown Seed keep your Meetings, so will they be full of glory, unto the astonishing of all that come among you, that it may now be known unto all people, that we are those whom the most High hath chosen, to write his Name upon (as that City of God in which he delights, which hath no breaths, may now be thought upon, and that tidings of deliverance may be sounded in her ears, in all Nations whither the is given, that the may flock as the Doves to the windows, through the opening of the Joyful Sound, that the Mighty GOD is risen in a poor and afflicted People in England, who cannot bow to any graven Image, nor give their power unto the Beast, but will follow the Lamb where-ever he goeth, chusing rather to die with him than to forsake him.

And dear Friends and Brethren, my further Exhortation to you from the Lord of Hosts is, That you all now do live in that Truth, which you have both heard and spoken of to others, that so your union in the Life and Power may stand; then will you be strong as Mount Sion, and an help one to another, the strong taking the weak by the hand, saying, I fell thee, and therefore cannot leave thee behind, but must have thee along with me: and this will not only increase your Number, but discourage your Enemies, when they see you keep your Meetings, and worship the God of Daniel, as at other times. And what though you are carried to Prisons by droves and flocks, and sent where-soever your Enemies have power, will not that their hour and power of darkness, be the hour in which the Father will glorify himself? yes, it will, for the Lord hath spoken it: and by this shall all men know you are Christ's Disciples; not as Judas to betray him, or deny him before men, but because you love him you keep his Commandments, and they are not grievous unto you, though men would make them so accord to their power by their pains and punishments. And I am further do declare unto you in the Name of my God, for your comfort and your Enemies torment, that he is bringing forth a Birth in you his People, which fears not Death, for it hath in despite of all Deaths power, passed through Deaths Country and Regions, as a Conqueror (through the strength of Jesus) and is now passed into Life and Immortality, where it dwells safely in love and peace with all men, not at all fearing what they can do unto it, having already tryed the strength of him, that is the power of death, which is the Devil: and this Birth, is that which is and shall be more and more as an Army terrible with Banners to affright the Wicked, when they see that there is no Conquering by Death or Banishment; because Death it self is Conquered, by that Birth immortal, in which you dwell and inhabit. O blessed Birth of the Morning of the everlasting Day of the Most High, Sing ye, sing ye, and again I say, sing ye the Songs of the Lamb, and rejoyce ye in the mighty God, for he lives that will Crown you, and he abides faithful that cannot deny himself, who is your God and Helper for ever, unto whom I am joyned with you, and in whom I dearly salute you, and embrace you all, who are faithful unto the Name and Truth of the Lord, in this Trying, but not Destructing day: before which day, [Glorious as the Noon-Day] in despite of all Clouds, and Darkness, in the Pure promised Heavenly Seed, in thee revealed and made manifest, unto the endless praise of thy God, over all the World and powers of Darkness for evermore.

These Things I was commanded to write unto you, in the opening Spirit of Life, where I am with you all, in the meek Suffering Spirit of the Lamb, who am now in outward Bonds (though in perfect inward Freedom) for the Name and Testimony of J E S U S.

Your Brother and Companion in the
Faith and Patience of the Lamb;

Ipswich Town Goal, this 28th
of the third Month, 1664.

JOHN CROOK.

Let this be read in the pure Fear of the Lord, in the Assemblies of the First-born.